by Government to explore the areas of trade with South Africa; and

(b) what results have been achieved, stating the trade agreements, if any, signed by Government with South African Government?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) As soon as the embargo on the trade with South Africa was lifted last year, the Indian Government, industry and trade took immediate initiatives for expension of the bilateral trade. Studies were commissioned to identify possible areas of economic cooperation, Air India introduced a direct air service, diplomatic and counsellor relations were established. Indian industry and trade exchanged a series of delegations. As a result of these developments there has been a quantum jump in India's trade with South Africa from Rs. 4.93 crores in 1992-93 to Rs. 181.16 crores in 1993-94. Necessary steps are also being taken to formally sign a Trade Agreement with the Government of the Republic of South Africa. An exclusive Indian Exhibition is being held at Johannesburg, South Africa next month to create better awareness about a wide range of Indian manufacturers.

Committee to examine excise duty concession

723. SHRI O. P. KOHLI: Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government had constituted a committee to examine the passing of Excise Duty concessions given in the Budget to the people by the manufacturers;

(b) if so, the details of the committee so constituted and whether the committee has submitted the report and if so, the salient features of the report and the action taken by Government thereon;

(c) the names of the manufacturers who have not yet passed the Excise Duty concessions to the consumers and the action taken against them;

(d) whether there have been cases where manufacturers have not paid any Excise Duty but have charged the Excise Duty by way of increasing the rates of their products; and

(e) if so, the details of such manufacturers and the action Government propose to take/have taken against them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED): (a) The Ministry of Finance, Department of Revenue has stated that the Central Board of Excise and Customs has not setup any Committee to examine the passing of Excise Duty concessions given in the Budget 1994-95, to the people by the manufacturers.

(b) to (e) Do not arise.

Change in procedure for issue of ration cards

724 SHRI AJIT P. K. JOGI: Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any proposal under its consideration to change the procedure for the issue of ration cards so as to prevent foreign nationals, specially Bangladeshi infiltrators, in getting such cards easily; and

(b) if not the details of the measures taken/proposed to be taken to prevent illegal migrants from Bangladesh getting ration cards?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED): (a) and (b) Operational responsibility for implementing the Public Distribution System (PDS) in the country rests with the State Governments and U.T. Administrations. Decisions regarding opening of Fair Price Shops, eligibility criteria for issue of ration cards to bonafide consumers and operation procedures and regulatory measures are taken by the State Governments and U.T. Administrations. Bonafide residents of a State are generally issued ration cards for getting access to PDS. The Government of National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi has reported that bonafide residents fulfilling requirements laid down under the Delhi Specified Articles (Regulation of Distribution) Order 1981 are issued ration cards. Ration card is not intended to be linked to any other benefit or confer any entlement other than access to PDS.

Assessment regarding working of Super Bazar

725. SHRIMATI CHANDRIKA ABHINANDAN JAIN: Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether any assessment has been made in regard to the working of the Super Bazar recently;

(b) if so, the outcome thereof and steps taken thereon; and

(c) the expenditure incurred on various projects during the last three years, year-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED): (a) and (b) Regular assessment and review of the functioning of Super Bazar is done by the Government periodically In case of any shortcoming or irregularity coming to notice, the Super Bazar is advised to take immediate remedial measures and submit compliance report.

(c) Super Bazar has incurred expenditure of Rs. 87.71 lakhs, Rs. 98.08 lakhs and Rs. 103.40 lakhs during the years 1991-92, 1992-93 and 1993-94 on various projects such as setting up of Departmental Stores, Automatic packing unit, Computerisation, Renovation of branches etc.

Prices of essential comodities in Super Bazar

726. SHRIMATI CHANDRIKA ABHINANDAN JAIN: Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) what is the percentage of the rise in the prices of essential commodities in the Super Bazar in comparison to the rates of 1990; and

(b) what are the reasons for this rise in prices and what steps/measures are being taken by Government to control the prices of the essential commodities in the Super Bazar?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED): (a) As per details in statement (*See* below)

(b) All the essential items are procured from manufacturers/open market. Hence the selling price has a direct bearing on the procurement cost. The margin of profit earned by the Super Bazar on all such items has almost been static.